

THE AMERICAN ROLE

or as a tendency to compromise with principles. Clearly, the Social British and American policies in Iran in wartime were dedicated to the same purpose: i.e., to treat Iran as a corridor of supplies to Russia to be evacuated at the end of hostilities, and to be restored to full independence as soon as the war was over. Thus, (logical!), the American government had as much interest in maintaining political stability in Iran as the British. Consequently, if America had faced its world responsibilities, its diplomacy should have contributed to the fulfillment of these basic objectives. Yet this was not quite done. The British bore the main burden of preserving the prestige of the West and of refuting the attacks of Communist propaganda. With much slenderer material resources, the British had to build up their own information apparatus, support the native nationalist elements, and perform numerous similar tasks. There was no American public relations bureau to aid the British and to dispel the doubts regarding the real intentions of the American West which British policy due to its imperialist past was bound to produce. A well-conceived and organized American propaganda machinery might have accomplished a great deal of good in the field of Irano-Western relations. It might have supported the British in these essential points where the British needed support and corrected them in others.

The blame for this state of affairs can hardly be attributed to the American Embassy in Teheran. The whole problem of American propaganda had to be solved at a higher level. To be sure, attempts were made to bring official American publicity agents to Iran, but

these steps proved either ineffective or were taken with too much delay.

The Office of War Information did send some men to Iran. The first was Harold Peters, former United Press correspondent. Ke was entrusted with the task of editing an American newspaper in Teheran which would satisfy the needs of American soldiers there and also serve as a general information organ for local consumption. Unfortunately Peters' status was ill-defined. He was not granted a diplomatic post as press attache at the Embassy, nor was he put into any clear position vis-a-vis the Persian Gulf Command. Local rivalry existed between the army and the Embassy, and both were none too

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